



**MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
7506 E. INDIAN SCHOOL ROAD
COMMUNITY DESIGN STUDIO - NAVE
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85251
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2007**

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT:

Art DeCabooter, Chairman
Erik Filsinger, Vice-Chair
Joan Fudala, Commissioner
Rand Hubbell, Commissioner
Gerry Miller, Commissioner
Arnold Roy, Commissioner
Tom Silverman, Commissioner
Linda Whitehead, Commissioner
Solange Whitehead, Commissioner

ABSENT:

Melinda Gulick, Commissioner
Virginia Korte, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

Bob Cafarella, Director
Claire Miller, Preserve Manager
Don Meserve, Preservation Planner
Kathy O'Connor

ALSO PRESENT:

Carla, Citizen Conservation Advocate
Ruthie Carll, MSC Managing Director
Leonard Marcisz, MSC Chairman
Linda Raish, MSC Community Development Director
BJ Heggli, MSC
Dan Gruber, MSC
Deke Joralman
Brad Lundahl
Con Englehorn

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman DeCabooter called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

A roll call and introductions indicated members and guests present as stated above.

2. **Approval of November 1, 2007 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Linda Whitehead suggested changing the phrase, "a funding mechanism was included..." in paragraph one of item 6, to "soliciting private donations was a funding mechanism included..." Also, in the last sentence of the same paragraph she suggested inserting "to explore this possibility..." after the words "task force."

Commissioner Miller requested that "Planning Task Force" in paragraph three of item 6 be changed to "Planning Committee," and the following paragraph be changed to "Commissioner Miller said a task force would be simpler than having a formal Committee review it."

Carla requested in item 12, that "She urged the Commission " be changed to "Carla urged the Commission."

COMMISSIONER MILLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 2007 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER FUDALA SECONDED. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF NINE (9) TO ZERO (0).

3. **State Land Reform**

Chairman DeCabooter announced that Senator Allen would not be able to attend the meeting as previously expected.

Carla reported that Governor Napolitano's staff and Legislative Council are working on a second draft of the State Land Reform Measure. There is ongoing discussion over how much of the measure would be placed in statute versus how much would be in the Constitution. Also to be resolved is the specificity of what would be in the Constitution, and whether there will be a list of lands in statute. Scottsdale's API land would not be affected regardless of whether there is a list or not, because the measure provides the ability to purchase API reclassified land, without auction, by means of a 25-year payment plan.

Another main sticking point is arriving at clear language to describe how the State Land Department is funded. Also to be determined is whether the single subject rule would be violated, since the measure would tie together disposition of State land and funding for the State Land Department. The goal is to have the Governor's Legislative Task Force reach an agreement before session begins.

Carla reported that Mayor Manross has been in close contact with the Governor. The Governor has made it clear that she wants State land reform on the ballot in 2008 as part of her legacy, and that all parties need to find a way to reach a consensus.

4. **MSC Activities**

Ms. Carll introduced Len Marcisz as the new Chairman of the Board for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.

Mr. Marcisz said Dan Gruber would share additional information regarding the MSC's concept for the Desert Discovery Center. The concept was created by the Conservancy in the interest of doing what is best for the Preserve and the citizens of Scottsdale. It is intended to represent a starting point, not an ending point, and would be refined as the community's DDC definition process moves forward. It is intended to stimulate thoughtful discussion and encourage other entities with an interest in the DDC to develop their own concepts and offer them for public consideration.

The Conservancy's mission involves advocacy, stewardship, and education regarding the Preserve. The Conservancy views the DDC as a future focal point for public education about the Preserve and as an advocacy force for preservation. The MSC believes that those objectives are congruent with the Commission's objectives, and invited the Commissioners to share their thoughts.

The DDC Committee identified seven potential scenarios for the Center's themes and the implications of those themes. A comprehensive survey was sent to volunteers and Board Members asking for their views on the scenarios. The Committee then developed a recommended theme and concept that was adopted by the Conservancy Board as the MSC's current point of view of the facility. It was based on the information that was available through the fall, and was adopted with the awareness that new information would become available as the process continues.

The Committee's suggested theme and concept, "The Science of the Sonoran Desert," was meant to be the unifying framework to encompass all the educational efforts of the DDC. It is meant to be interpreted very broadly, and would incorporate the natural sciences, the social sciences and the human aspects of the Preserve. While light would be appropriately shed on the Preserve's past and the present, it would also look into the future, covering issues such as sustainability, conservation and climate change.

Mr. Gruber summarized the eight elements of the Conservancy's concept for the DDC:

1. The design should be a leading edge green facility, consistent with the City's environmental policy. This would allow the building itself to be part of the educational experience.
2. Most of the educational resources would be oriented towards dynamic programming. Change is the key to encouraging return visits. The DDC could leverage resources, through partnerships, to explore more topics than could be covered in permanent exhibits. This would be a departure from what most similar facilities in the U.S. do, but would go a long way towards keeping it vital and interesting.
3. Establish a research institute, based at the DDC, that would focus on site-specific and area-specific issues of global concern. The DDC could establish partnerships with existing entities, offering researchers a living laboratory, volunteers to assist in research, and a public forum for outreach efforts. In return, the DDC would have the opportunity to offer visitors a unique, memorable, and significant experience, with the opportunity to make a difference.

4. The basic story about the desert and the Preserve would be told through the permanent installations and exhibits. This introduction would offer a meaningful experience to short-term visitors and encourage them to return.
5. There would be a visible, physical presence for the Conservancy at the DDC. The Conservancy hopes to be a major provider of activities, programs and volunteers at the DDC, and would need some space to facilitate them.
6. In support of tourism interests, there would be a clearing house at the DDC for information about the Sonoran Desert and the Preserve, focusing on related recreational and cultural opportunities available throughout Scottsdale and the vicinity. This would not be duplicative of hotel concierge services.
7. The DDC would serve as a substantial, first-rate venue for business meetings, private events, and community activities. This is a common feature of similar facilities and is typically used as a source of revenue. It would attract people to the Preserve who might not otherwise visit it, and in the process extend the audience and the educational experience, and maximize the benefits of the space.
8. A cafe and gift shop would provide additional opportunities to extend and reinforce the educational experience, by demonstrating conservation and sustainability in action.

Commissioner Miller inquired what type of person the Conservancy's concept was aimed at. Mr. Gruber responded that two different audiences had been identified. The first is the traditional Scottsdale resident and visitor, who are older, educated, affluent adults without children, and who expect high quality activities and event. It is also very important to appeal to the second group, consisting of younger people, and families with children who have different expectations, and are oriented towards dynamic change, activities, and participation.

Commissioner Fudala said people are clamoring to see some of the artifacts that were unearthed in the Pinnacle Peak Village dig. She hoped that the permanent facilities would be able to incorporate them. Ms. Carll added that humans are a part of Preserve's story, and such artifacts would certainly fit into the concept of the DDC.

5. **Planning Committee Report on Preserve Operations**

Vice Chair Filsinger asked the Commission to consider adopting the Planning Committee report on Preserve operations that Commissioner Linda Whitehead presented at the last meeting.

COMMISSIONER LINDA WHITEHEAD MOVED TO ADOPT THE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT ON OPERATIONAL CONCERNS. COMMISSIONER SOLANGE WHITEHEAD SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF NINE (9) TO ZERO (0).

6. **Promotion Committee Activities Including Recent Efforts to Promote the Preserve**

Commissioner Solange Whitehead presented examples of the informational inserts that the Promotions Committee has been providing for inclusion in the City's water bills.

She said the Promotions Committee is tracking the media to ensure that a consistent message is presented about the Preserve and how it benefits the community.

7. **Preserve Director's Report: DDC Consultant Status and Preserve Updates**

Mr. Cafarella reported that the DDC consultants have had a number of meetings with Commissioners from both the MSPC and the Tourism Development Commission, Council Members, and organizations. A workshop was held with sixteen individuals, selected by the DDC Task Force, and it generated positive feedback from a number of participants. The consultants have indicated that they already have a lot to work with. The Commission will receive a synthesis of all the information gathered at the workshop.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead encouraged the Commissioners to make appointments for their individual interviews with the consultants.

8. **Preserve Manager's Report: Work Projects and Maintenance Activities Updates**

Ms. Miller reported that flagging continues for the new corridor in the Tom's Thumb area. Additionally, the Eagle Scouts will be participating in a project to remove fountain grass in the Preserve.

She said she received information regarding an illegal geocache at Tom's Thumb. The geocaching community is working to identify where it is located.

A weed identification manual has been prepared to assist in identifying invasive weeds.

9. **Future Executive Session for McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission**

VICE CHAIR FILSINGER MOVED TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON JANUARY 3, 2007, TO DISCUSS AND CONSULT WITH ROBERT CAFARELLA, THE COMMISSION'S DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE, TO CONSIDER THE COMMISSION'S POSITION AND INSTRUCT ITS REPRESENTATIVE WITH RESPECT TO THE PURCHASE, SALE OR LEASE FOR INCLUSION IN THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED STUDY BOUNDARY FOR THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE INCLUDING PROPERTY CALLED THE GATEWAY LOCATED AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF BELL ROAD AND THOMPSON PEAK PARKWAY, AND STATE TRUST LAND, BOTH RECLASSIFIED STATE TRUST LAND AND UN-RECLASSIFIED STATE TRUST LAND. COMMISSIONER HUBBELL SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF NINE (9) TO ZERO (0).

10. **Commissioner Comments and Public Comments**

Commissioner Miller reported that all of the tamarisk has been removed from the Thompson Peak Parkway corridor.

Mr. Cafarella offered a report on a recent sighting, in the Preserve, of a mountain lion with two cubs.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead commended the new trail work on Lost Dog Wash, saying the recent rains caused no visible erosion.

11. **Agenda Items for Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 3, 2008.

**VICE CHAIR FILSINGER MOVED TO ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION.
COMMISSIONER RAND SECONDED. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE
OF NINE (9) TO ZERO (0).**

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the regular meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
A/V Tronics, Inc.